

BOOK REVIEWS

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Psocoptera. pp. 1-79, 333-335 (App. I-II), 363-372 (Index) in Wells, A. (ed.) **Zoological Catalogue of Australia. Vol. 26** (Psocoptera, Phthiraptera, Thysanoptera).—C. N. Smithers. 1996. Melbourne: CSIRO Publishing (\$74.95 for the volume).

Order Psocoptera constitutes the first section of volume 26 of the Zoological Catalogue. An editorial preface at the beginning of the volume states that each section will cite by name and original reference all species known to occur in Australia. It also notes that a computer program provides consistent format and style of presentation, and that authors are responsible only for the information content. The preface also defines the geographic area covered as, in addition to Australia proper, the distant islands of Norfolk, Macquarie, McDonald, Christmas, and Cocos, as well as the Australian Antarctic Territory.

The format specifies a few introductory pages in which the order is diagnosed; some general accounts are cited dealing with morphology, biology, ecology, and taxonomy; the modern classification, biology, and zoogeography pertaining to Australia are briefly discussed. There follow acknowledgments and a bibliography of references to the works cited in the introductory pages. Each family is then introduced with two brief paragraphs for each. In these the number of genera and species worldwide, the number in the Australian fauna, the distribution of the species worldwide and the sorts of habitats that they occupy are discussed. The family may be diagnosed morphologically, as was done for each of the Psocopteran families. Taxa above the level of family are neither named nor diagnosed in the body of the catalogue (which results in much repetition of characters in the family diagnoses), but the families are entered in a sequence pertaining to their arrangement by suborders and family groups. For the Psocoptera these higher taxa are named in a conspectus of the families included in the introductory pages. Following the two introductory paragraphs for a family is a list of references which aims (apparently) to include important papers on taxonomy, biology, and Australian fauna. Within each family the genera are arranged alphabetically. Under each genus the reference to the original description is entered, followed by the type species with mode of designation and literature reference where necessary. This is followed by a complete synonymy of the genus with literature reference to each generic synonym with type species and mode of its designation for each. A useful feature following each list of synonyms for both genera and species is a brief paragraph entitled "Taxonomic decision for synonymy" in which the literature citations are entered in which each synonym has been proposed. Following the generic synonymy is a paragraph entitled "Extralimital distribution" in which is listed each country or region of the world from which the genus has been reported. The list is often long but seemingly in no order. Under each genus is a heading for each species recorded from Australia. Under each species heading the name is repeated, followed by a complete reference to the work in which the original description appeared. There follow the type data: sex, location, and

accession number for the holotype, and the same for all paratypes, where known. The type locality follows. Each synonym is then entered as a separate paragraph with the same data as for the valid name. This is followed by the "Taxonomic decision for synonymy" paragraph. There follows a paragraph on distribution (within and outside Australia) and habitat.

Dr. Smithers is immanently qualified to provide the information content of the Psocoptera section. He has lived in Australia for 36 years, and throughout that period he has devoted most of his entomological efforts to the study of Australian Psocoptera. It is notable that of the 252 species listed Smithers is either the sole or first author of 100 of them. A veteran catalogue writer, Smithers remains here true to his earlier policy of making no changes of taxonomic status in a catalogue. Thus there are no entries for the Psocoptera in appendix III "Taxonomic decisions made in this work." As a result of this policy, a few items which strike this reviewer as wrong are reported exactly as they stand in the literature (through the author's stated cut-off date of June 30, 1994), and can not be viewed as errors of the author.

Despite the author's rigid adherence to format and policy, a few errors of commission and omission were noted. On page 1 is the statement that Mockford and Garcia Aldrete (1976) replaced Pearman's family group Caecilietae with two superfamilies, Asiopsocoidea and Caecilioidea. Pearman (1936), I believe correctly, assigned to his family groups a status "somewhat superior to that of a superfamily." Mockford and Garcia Aldrete (1976) clearly stated that these two superfamilies ranked as subdivisions of the group Caecilietae. Under Psyllipsocidae (pg. 17) is the statement "Polymorphism related to crowding and light intensity has been reported . . ." This refers to *Psyllipsocus ramburii* Selys-Longchamps, in which Badonnel (1949) showed that polymorphism at ordinary temperatures is based completely on group size, whether or not the insects are exposed to any light. On page 18, the synonymy of *Psocathropos microps* (Enderlein 1903) with *P. lachlani* Ribaga 1899 by Lienhard and Halperin (1988) was overlooked, resulting in these two names being listed as separate species. The English text is almost completely free of typographical errors, but bibliographic entries in French, German, and Spanish did not fare so well. I found 15 typos in these.

Australia has a large and varied psocid fauna, and Dr. Smithers has presented an important reference work which will be essential for the libraries of all psocid systematists and of all biogeographers concerned with the Southern Hemisphere.—Edward L. Mockford, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Illinois State University, Normal, IL 61790-4120.

LITERATURE CITED

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- Mockford, E. L. and A. N. Garcia Aldrete. 1976. A new species and notes on the taxonomic position of *Asiopsocus* Günther (Psocoptera). Sw. Nat. 21:335–346.
- Pearman, J. V. 1936. The taxonomy of the Psocoptera: Preliminary sketch. Proc. R. Entomol. Soc. Lond. 5:58–62.